The Mistake

"Augusta was not a mistake." How many times had I repeated those words, mantra-like?

The truth was more complex, and slightly cruel, because technically, by most people's standards, and certainly those of my parents and sister, Augusta's conception resided firmly under the heading: "Marie's Mistakes". Needless to mention how lengthy the list had become, over the years. It shall suffice to say that getting pregnant as an unmarried seventeen-year-old was situated at the top of said list.

Augusta was not planned, but that didn't make my daughter a "mistake". Her father was the same age as myself, and in the equivalent school year, although he had attended a different local school. Whilst not precisely a "boyfriend", Tom had not been a one night stand. More of a friend, and a three night stand, and someone I had been on a couple of dates with. Night Three, incidentally, had been Augusta's conception.

Now, here we were, greeting my oh-so-perfect parents, and their Golden Girl, who got it all right. Yes, of course, my sister, Kate, had got married and had her babies in the right order. And now, here was Kate with "that lovely young man", aka

Michael, and their three perfect children: twin boys, and an angelic little girl, who did not "show everyone up" at family gatherings, as Augusta often had. Like mother, like daughter.

It was exhausting, being the imperfect one. But let my family regard Augusta as my mistake. She was perfectly imperfect, and she had my permission to be so. How much more exhausting it must be to be Kate, maintaining the illusion. Imperfections were reality, after all. And that applied to us all.